

of an effort by the Senate Republican leader to offer a wide-ranging number of unrelated amendments to the bill.

Unfortunately, this frustration was directed at the wrong side of the aisle. Union collective bargaining is not an issue recommended by the 9/11 Commission and should not be in this bill. It seems to me we are hearing mixed messages from the other side. It appears that they are willing to include provisions backed by the unions but not willing to debate and vote on tough security-related measures such as those contained in the Cornyn amendment.

The amendment offered by the Senator from Texas would do so much more to strengthen our national security than the labor measure, but Members on the other side have aggressively defended that amendment of last week. Of these two measures, there can be no debate as to which provision does more to protect our Nation. The other side of the aisle has it wrong.

I generally agree with what the Senator from Michigan said last week, but you cannot have it both ways when it comes to securing our Nation. If we want to limit this bill to debating and implementing the 9/11 recommendations, let's not compromise national security at the same time by allowing collective bargaining of the TSA screeners. Setting this policy would greatly hinder TSA's flexibility to respond to terrorism threats, flesh intelligence, and emergencies as they arise. TSA needs to have the ability to move the screeners around as schedules and threats change.

TSA was created to be a nimble agency. Let me give some examples of how TSA has proven its ability to quickly respond.

During the August 2006 United Kingdom air bombing threat, TSA screeners were briefed and deployed where they were needed to respond to the threat.

TSA has employed its flexibility to evacuate patients at the Texas VA Hospital in the path of Hurricane Rita and helped with the evacuation of people in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

Last year, when Lebanon erupted into violence and fighting broke out, TSA was able to rapidly respond to expedite the evacuation of thousands of Americans in Lebanon and thousands of legitimate refugees.

TSA deployed 27 of its officers to Cyprus when fighting broke out. TSA was able to quickly respond, assisting airport authorities with verifying passenger identification documents and screening the large volume of evacuees.

This labor-backed provision has nothing to do with enhancing our homeland security, and the President has repeatedly said he will veto the bill if collective bargaining is included. If we are going to be sincere in improving homeland security, that is one thing, but moving forward with collective bargaining for TSA is unexplainable. The 9/11 Commission made a lot of recommendations, most of which I sup-

port, but a collective bargaining provision didn't even make the list.

I can only hope that when the bill passes and it goes to conference that conferees will do the right thing and drop the provision. Failure to do so will only delay our effort to strengthen this Nation's security.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remainder of the time be controlled by this side of the aisle, that I be permitted to speak for 8 minutes, that the Senator from Illinois, Mr. OBAMA, be permitted to speak for 8 minutes, and then we will see how much time we have remaining.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until the hour of 11:15 in order to accommodate folks on the other side of the aisle.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### IRAQ

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, 9 months ago, 13 Senators cast their vote for a 1-year deadline for redeployment of most U.S. troops from Iraq. Our country has been waiting impatiently for Washington to find the right way forward for Iraq and the right policy for our troops. It seemed then, when those 13 votes were cast, as it does now, that was the only way to help Iraq and the Middle East to emerge from a nightmarish war that has delivered chaos where it sought order, fear where it promised freedom, and open-ended escalation where the President promised us mission accomplished. This is a war which has cost us dearly in just about every possible measure of American interest and power.

Today, Democrats stand nearly united behind a strategy for success, a strategy for success that includes a deadline needed to force the Iraqis to stand up for Iraq. A lot has changed in the last 9 months, but I am more convinced than ever that a combination of serious, sustained diplomacy, real diplomacy, leveraged by a 1-year deadline for the redeployment of U.S. troops, is the best way to achieve our goal of stability in Iraq and security in the region.

I listened to administration spokespeople in the last few days as they went on television blasting the Democratic proposal. It is interesting how they continue their habit of just setting up a straw man, putting something out there that has nothing to do with the reality of the program, and then knocking it down. They are fond of saying: a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq would be just terrible to our

interests in the region. Let's make it clear. A 1-year date from now, with discretion to the President to leave troops there to finish the training, with discretion to the President to leave troops there to chase al-Qaida, with discretion to the President to leave troops there to protect American facilities and forces, with the ability to have an over-the-horizon presence—a 1-year deadline from today, which would be entering the 6th year of this war, is not a precipitous withdrawal of any kind whatsoever. In fact, there are many people in the country who think that is not soon enough.

The fact is, this administration wants to sow fear in Americans, so they choose to debate something that is not the proposal of those of us who have put this proposal forward. What we propose to do is change the strategy of our mission so we can achieve success.

What we have seen is that this open-endedness you just kind of say we need to do this and we need to do that and we want the Iraqis to stand up and we want the police to do better and Prime Minister Maliki said he is going to deliver—none of that delivers anything. The Iraqi politicians know that as long as there is no deadline, they can take as long as they want to work out whatever power struggles and differences they have. So they are using the presence of American forces as cover for their own goals, for their own desires, until we in the United States say to them: Hey, folks, get serious. Our young people are prepared—obviously, because we have been doing it for 4 years—to put their lives on the line in order to help you have democracy, but you have to grab that democracy, you have to make decisions, and you have to go in and police your neighborhoods.

The only way you are going to change that is by being responsible and demanding something.

It provides the President the discretion to be able to complete the training. What else, after 5 years, would we want to be in Iraq for besides finishing the training and standing up the Iraqi forces and chasing al-Qaida and fighting the legitimate war on terror?

This 1-year deadline is sound policy. It is based on the Iraq Study Group's goal of redeploying U.S. combat forces from Iraq by the first quarter of 2008. It is consistent with the timeframe for transferring control to the Iraqis that was set forth by General Casey and the schedule agreed upon by the Iraqi Government itself.

Even the President has said, under his new strategy, responsibility for security would be transferred to Iraqis before the end of this year. If the President is telling us that responsibility for security can be transferred to the Iraqis by the end of this year, don't we have a right to hold the President accountable for that goal? Don't we have a right to hold the Iraqis accountable for that goal? If the goal is to transfer security to them by the end of this